

***** Embargoed until 2pm Thursday 1 December 2016 *****

Inquiry publishes first anonymised summaries from the Truth Project

The Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse has today published the first personal accounts from victims and survivors who have taken part in its Truth Project.

The 45 accounts, which have been anonymised, provide a first indication of the abuse suffered by children who were abused and/or let down by those in authority who should have protected them.

The Inquiry aims to publish as many anonymised summaries as possible and will use the information to better understand the scale, scope and nature of child sexual abuse.

Panel member Dru Sharpling, who leads the Inquiry's work on the Truth Project, said:

"I have personally facilitated some of the Truth Project private sessions, so I have heard some of these experiences first hand. This first summary of personal experiences serves as a powerful reminder of the devastating consequences of child sexual abuse.

"Reading these accounts will be difficult for many people, but nowhere near as difficult as it is for the victims and survivors who have come forward to help the Inquiry by sharing their experiences. I want to thank them and reassure them that their bravery will help us to identify how we can better protect children in the future from such abuse and betrayal."

Around 500 victims and survivors have expressed an interest in attending a Truth Project private session; to date nearly 150 people will have shared their experiences with us in a private session. Victims and survivors can also share their experiences in writing and we will publish these anonymous experiences in due course, with the permission of those who took part.

The Truth Project provides a safe environment in which victims and survivors of child sexual abuse can share their experiences with a trained facilitator who will listen to them, not challenge them, and not judge them. For some it may be the first time they have spoken to anyone about their abuse. The Inquiry will provide support before, during and after people share their experiences.

Fay Maxted from the Victims and Survivors Consultative Panel said:

'The Truth Project offers every victim and survivor the opportunity to speak out about their experiences and the ways in which they have been failed by the people and institutions that

should have protected them as children. We can't change the past, but the valuable insights from the Truth Project will help to develop recommendations that will create better protection for children in the future.'

Many victims and survivors who have taken part in the Truth Project wanted to share their feedback on taking part. Here are some of their comments:

'I found talking about my experience now helps, and I would like to help others, women, men and children to know help is coming. We will no longer have to keep silent. We will be believed. It is not our fault.'

'I wanted to tell you how much my Truth session has helped me. Now that I have been able to let the Inquiry know about what had happened and how it affected others as well as me, I feel like a great burden has been lifted.'

'After 37 years of silence and self-blame, I found the courage to tell. I commend the Truth Project to all victims as our opportunity to give our version of events through a process that is safe and dignified. Go for it!'

Victims and survivors of child sexual abuse can take part in the Truth Project in a private session (face-to-face) or share their experience in writing. Contact details are: Tel: 0800 917 1000 (this line is open Monday to Friday 9am to 8pm and will also be open this Saturday from 10am to 4pm)

You can also email us at contact@iicsa.org.uk; or write to us for free. Simply write 'Freepost HEAD OFFICE' on the envelope (no other address details are needed)

ENDS

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